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DE RUEHKH #2743/01 3310515  
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5378  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RHMFIISS/CJTF HOA PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 002743

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DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, AF/SE NATSIOS, NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/26/2026

TAGS: PREL PGOV PREF PHUM KPKO SU US AU

SUBJECT: MINAWI CALLED TO KHARTOUM TO BRIEF CABINET ON DARFUR

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: Senior Assistant to the President and Sudanese Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi has been called to return to Khartoum from Darfur by Vice President Taha in order to brief the Government's High Commission on Peace and Security and the Cabinet. He intends to emphasize that reversing the deteriorating security environment is key to achieving the Government's stated goal of bringing peace and security to Darfur. He will ask the Government to facilitate an immediate cessation of hostilities of all Parties, support for freedom of movement to facilitate humanitarian assistance and commerce, and request their support for his efforts to unify the moderate non-signatory commanders. Minawi indicated he had little time before more commanders deserted him and emphasized the immediate requirement for non-military logistics. End Summary.

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MINAWI FRUSTRATED WITH GOVERNMENT BACKED MILITIA  
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12. (C) In a wide ranging meeting in El Fasher with Embassy Senior Security Officer, Minawi complained that much of the fighting in South Darfur was being orchestrated by the Wali. He claimed the Wali had provided significant funding and resources to Free Will militia in Geraida and Muhajeriya in order to push his forces and people in the direction of North Darfur. He stated that there were over 32,000 displaced villagers in Sheiria and Muhajeriya from fighting over the past two months. Minawi also noted that the emboldened activities of other militia forces were caused by the Wali. However, when asked about the reports of his threats to mobilize forces against these militias, Minawi was evasive, only indicating that his forces had defended the people against militias over the past few weeks.

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CEASEFIRE CRITICAL  
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13. (C) Minawi understands that without the complete cessation of hostilities there will be little chance of unifying non-signatories to the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). This will be his primary point of discussion for the High Commission and its chair, President Omar al-Bashir. He also stated that this had been a good year for agriculture in Darfur, but continued insecurity could significantly impede the harvesting of crops. Without freedom of movement for the people of Darfur and the international community, Minawi predicted the humanitarian situation would continue to deteriorate.

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PROSPECTS FOR NON-SIGNATORY CONFERENCE  
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¶4. (C) Minawi said it would be difficult to unify the non-signatory commanders. Furthermore, some were beyond hope. He agreed with National Intelligence and Security Service Chief Salah Gosh's recent comment that Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) leader Khalil Ibrahim held no discernible vision for Darfur. He was only an instigator of troubles and therefore would remain outside any effort to bring non-signatories to the DPA. However, others under the National Redemption Front (NRF) umbrella were ready to move towards peace.

¶5. (C) When asked about the UN/AU proposal to hold a non-signatory political leader conference with the Government and himself, he claimed that Ahmed Deraige, Sharif Harir, and other expatriate political leaders had lost the confidence of the commanders in the field. He flatly stated there could be no successful conclusion to a political conference unless the political leaders had the support of the commanders, which first required extensive unification and organizational efforts prior to any political conference.

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MINAWI: "I CAN'T SUCCEED WITHOUT RESOURCES"  
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¶6. (C) Minawi exhibited considerable frustration, noting that much of his effort to unify commanders could not be initiated due to a lack of resources. He claimed to have achieved agreement on at least two occasions with SLM Unity and some G-19 commanders, but could not compete with Khalil Ibrahim

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and others who continue to provide the means for these commanders to fight. He said that Eritrea, Chad, the National Congress Party, Popular Congress Party, and Umma Party were all using Darfur to advance their own political agendas.

¶7. (C) Thus, one of the primary objectives of his trip to Darfur was to re-connect with his own commanders. He succeeded in calling them together in Dar el Salaam and Muhajeriya and was attempting to meet others in North Darfur before his return to Khartoum. Minawi believes that most of the commanders he has lost to the NRF have joined due to the supplies the NRF can provide in the short term and the additional military capacity to seize what they need from Government forces in the long term. Minawi predicted he would continue to lose commanders to SLM Unity and G-19 if he does not receive the requisite resources to sustain his forces in the field. Minawi concluded that his two most urgent requirements were immediate non-military logistics and support for political development of the SLM.

HUME